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ABSTRACT

This paper is part of a series designed to help community groups engage in discussion on the possibility of individual and community transformation. The text is intended to be read aloud by the group facilitator with frequent pauses for discussion. It is accompanied by a reading list, activities, and discussion questions to review what has been learned, explore aspects of the discussion more fully, and apply what has been learned to one's own situation and community. This text describes how basic principles of native life--interrelatedness, cooperation, and a recognition of the spiritual basis of all life--were disrupted by the fur trade. Describing an experience with a residential school for the Dene people of the Northwest Territories, the text also discusses the loss of language and cultural identity, alienation between generations, and severe psychological traumas and the resulting child abuse/neglect, loss of good parenting skills, alcoholism, and unemployment produced by this educational policy. The paper outlines 12 universal principles about the nature of existence, nature and purpose of human beings, and means of preserving and enhancing the well-being of individuals and communities that must be rearticulated in the journey back to health and wholeness for both individuals and communities. (NEC)

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The Four Worlds Development Project is the result of many people's efforts and wisdom. Some were directly involved, others inspired us through their work in education and alcohol and drug abuse prevention.

Direction for this project was set at a conference held in Lethbridge, Alberta in December, 1982. Participants at the conference were native elders, spiritual leaders and professionals of various native communities in North America. Their contributions were framed by their deep commitment to native people and their own, often hard won, experience. To each of them we offer our deepest respect and appreciation.

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Editorial note:

In English it is impossible to refer to a person without using a pronoun that indicates gender or sex (e.g. he or she, him or her, his or hers). Since there is no special word to refer to a person whose gender is not known, most writers have chosen to use the masculine form in these situations.

This custom of using the masculine form when referring to a person who is not known to be a female, has caused a conspicuous absence of reference to women in English writing.

Thus all of the great ideas and discoveries discussed in English literature are expressed in masculine terms and the reader constantly visualizes males, rather than females, as active participators in the world. Our society's tendency to devalue the role and contributions of women is only augmented by this lack of picturing women in an active creative role.

The Four Worlds Development Project has chosen to alternate the use of feminine and masculine pronouns whenever the reference is unspecific. This choice of usage is a deliberate one to avoid the the awkwardness of the compound form (he/she; him or her) while at the same time acknowledging the harmful consequences of bowing to a convention that persistently forces its audience to visualize the world as dominated by men and operating on ideas expressed in masculine terms.

Introduction

This series of discussion papers has been especially designed for small community groups; we call these "core groups". Our aim is that as people learn more about themselves and their community, they will want to get involved in creating new options, new patterns of personal and community dynamics, and in short, in promoting the ongoing process of human development in themselves and their community.

The core of anything is the heart and center of that thing. The core of a human development process is the people who, by their unity of vision, their personal commitment to growth and their leadership (by example) form the pattern around which other people cluster as positive changes take place in the community.

The Four Worlds Project promotes the development of core groups which will engage in discussion on the possibility of individual and community transformation, and conduct action-oriented research on aspects of personal and community life. It is anticipated that this group will, in some sense, establish new structural patterns around which the life of the community can organize itself--patterns that are more life-preserving, life-enhancing and development-promoting than those currently being utilized.

The core group, as it gains clarity of vision and takes action on that vision, will attract others who will also participate in the learning-transformation process. The fundamental strategic problem is not whether core groups can have such an influence. That they can is an established fact in a wide variety of case studies on social change. The challenge is twofold. The first problem is to tease out of obscurity and isolation in any community of learners those individuals who are in some way already facilitators of the organic change process in the community. The second task is to unite the hearts of these individuals in a common vision of human possibility that transcends social and political barriers to positive understanding and collaboration.

It is with the goal of helping individuals and communities face these two challenges that this discussion series was prepared. Accept them as your own and use them in whatever way you feel will be appropriate and effective.

We envision a process in which a group facilitator helps the group go through the text together, stopping frequently to discuss the points that are made. The activities and discussion questions can be used to help review what has been learned, to explore some aspects of the discussion more fully, and to apply what you have learned to your own situation and community. Much of the material can be read aloud (either by the facilitator or by various members of the

study group in turn) so that people are not limited by their reading ability in their efforts to understand the material. We anticipate that a natural outcome of this discussion process will be that the group will decide to take action in the community.

This series is just an experiment. It is not meant to be a final product. Let us know what you think, what you liked and what you didn't, and what helped you learn and what didn't. During the next year we hope to develop a set of video tapes to go with the series and maybe produce some more discussion papers to develop some of the ideas further. We need you to help us make this project a success.

But some of the nonsense was evil, since it concealed great crimes. For example, teachers of children in the United States of America wrote this date on blackboards again and again, and asked the children to memorize it with pride and joy:

1492

The teachers told the children that this was when their continent was discovered by human beings. Actually, millions of human beings were already living full and imaginative lives on the continent in 1492. That was simply the year in which sea pirates began to cheat and rob and kill them.

Here was another piece of evil nonsense which children were taught: that the sea pirates eventually created a government which became a beacon of freedom to human beings everywhere else...

Here is how the sea pirates were able to take whatever they wanted from anybody else: they had the best boats in the world, and they were meaner than anybody else, and they had gunpowder, which was a mixture of potassium nitrate, charcoal, and sulphur. They touched this seemingly listless powder with fire and it turned violently into gas. This gas blew projectiles out of metal tubes at terrific velocities. The projectiles cut through meat and bone very easily; so the pirates could wreak the wiring, or the bellows, or the plumbing of a stubborn human being, even when he was far, far away.

The chief weapon of the sea pirates, however, was their capacity to astonish. Nobody else could believe, until it was much too late, how heartless and greedy they were.

Kurt Vonnegut (from The Breakfast of Champions, pp. 10-12)

Many history books about North America begin in 1492 with the "discovery" of "America" by Columbus. Only recently have historians begun writing about North America's long history before 1492. Scientists, by carbon dating tools found near Old Crow, Yukon, are now claiming that the Native people were living in North America more than forty thousand years ago. This type of scientific evidence only supports what Native people have always known and preserved through oral histories that span many, many generations--that they themselves are the original inhabitants and settlers of North America.

Before the time of Columbus, Native people had explored and settled the entire length of North and South America, from Alaska south to Tierra del Fuego, the southern tip of South America. They had diversified into about six hundred distinct groups, each with its own civilization. Each group had adapted to the environment it settled in, and had developed a way of life that was ideally suited to its unique circumstances. Civilizations with highly organized social structures, with profoundly practical philosophical and religious knowledge, highly developed agriculture, advanced art, and exquisite craftsmanship flourished throughout North and South America. At the same time highly skilled hunters travelled in small bands, earning their living from the harsh but beautiful arctic tundra, a part of the world still considered uninhabitable by Europeans.

Many of the features of these Native civilizations have made enormous contributions to North American life as it evolved over the centuries, though few people recognize the origin of these innovations. Let's look at a few examples of how Native people helped to "Americanize the white man", as one author has described it.

It is estimated that more than fifty percent of the agricultural produce of the United States comes from crops which Native people domesticated and introduced to the European settlers. It would be hard to imagine life in North America without corn, tobacco, white and sweet potatoes, beans, peanuts, tomatoes, pumpkins, chocolate, American cotton and rubber. No more jack-o-lanterns, baked potatoes, chocolate bars, or bouncy rubber balls! Many Europeans were living in a state of permanent semi-starvation when they first encountered this abundance of agricultural products. In fact, when Indian domesticated potatoes were brought back to Europe, they changed history. Farm families in Ireland that were starving on four acres of wheat or rye, were able to grow enough food with just one acre of potatoes. And the next time you sit down to a bowl of corn flakes, remember that toasted flaked corn was originally an Indian dish.

The contribution of Native people to America's political system is no less remarkable than the one they made to agriculture. The Iroquois confederacy advised the early,

quarrelling British colonies of North America with the following counsel:

> Our Wise forefathers established Union and Amity between the Five Nations. This has made us formidable, this has given us great Weight and Authority with our neighboring Nations. We are a powerful Confederacy; and by your observing the same Methods our Wise Forefathers have taken, you will acquire such Strength and power. Therefore whatever befalls you, never fall out with one another. (Quoted in "Americanizing the Whiteman" by Felix Cohen)

This powerful example of a centralized system that allowed five autonomous nations to live together in peace, and to work together for their common good, was balanced by a strong commitment to local control in the government systems developed by many Native tribes before the coming of Columbus to America. The Cherokee chiefs, like the leaders of many other Indian tribes, refused to make hasty decisions on behalf of their people. All matters of importance were thoroughly discussed in the councils and approved by unanimous agreement, or failing that, a majority decision. The constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy also gave the right to vote equally to women as well as men.

This right of each individual to have equal opportunity to express his opinions by vote has become an important part of Canada's democratic heritage. It is so well accepted as an essential principle of democratic government that many people have forgotten that the early political leaders who

established democracy as the form of government in the white colonies, consulted with the Cherokee leaders on how to establish a form of government that would incorporate a

> caution against aggrandizement of government power, the preference for local self-government even though it seems less efficient, the trust in the ability of good neighbors to settle their own problems by mutual accomodation without totalitarian rule ... (Cohen, "Americanizing the Whiteman")

Even the term "O.K." is an Anglicized form of the Choctow word "okeh", meaning that the consultation has reached a point at which practical agreement is possible, even though perfection may not have been reached. These, then, are just a few of the contributions the Indian people have made to the North American democratic tradition: universal sufferage for women as well as men, the pattern of regional governments within a centralized system (i.e. provinces within a country) we call federalism, the idea that leaders should be servants of the people rather than masters, and the recognition of the right of the individual work toward his vision of a better world.

The medical profession has also benefitted greatly from the Indian civilization. Even up to this day scientists have not been able to find a medicinal herb anywhere in Canada or the United States that was not known to the Indians. Some of these medicinal products that were used by native healers are quinine, oil of wintergreen, petroleum jelly, arnica (used

Where does that leave us, the indigenous people? They call us Indian, but Indian means indigenous. It means we are the protectors of the land and all life in it. We are the spiritual centre and always have been. That is what we have to offer this warring world at this time in history.

Oren Lyons (Iroquois)

for sprains and bruises), witch hazel, cascara sagrada (a laxitive), and ipecas (used to induce vomiting).

There are many, many other important contributions that Native people have made to the North American way of life. Group athletic contests and team sports were a part of the recreational activities of many Indian tribes and some of these games, modified over time, are played by all types of Canadians today. Another favorite leisure activity of Canadians is "going back to nature". Whether or not the campers or hikers use such Indian inventions as teepees, moccasins, canoes, hammocks, pack baskets, toboggans, or snowshoes, and whether or not they chew gum, smoke tobacco, or munch peanuts, popcorn, or chocolate, they are enjoying a closeness to nature that was an integral part of the way of life developed by the aboriginal inhabitants of America.

An important thing to remember is that like all of the other great civilizations everywhere, Native American people evolved a way of life that worked. It allowed them to earn a livelihood, to maintain their culture and pass it on to their descendants, and to understand the world they lived in. The simple fact that the first settlers of this continent had produced civilizations that made sense and worked for them was not understood by the large majority of Europeans who came to explore the "new world". Coming from a civilization that had evolved in very different ways, they could only

Because of his exposure to dominant society, the Indian has suffered the breakdown of his culture and of the things he held dear. He was happy, he was in harmony with his environment and with the world. This happiness was broken down, although we still have remnants of it. The Indian people had great respect for God or Spirit, but this belief is also gradually losing its influence.....While we believe these traditional ways could serve as guidelines for our future happiness, we face great frustrations. Our ways seem always to contradict the ways of the dominant society.

Allen Quetone (Kiowa)

compare what they saw to their own ways. They reasoned that anything that was different must necessarily be inferior or not as well-developed as their own ways.

Thus, the coming of the white explorers and fur traders was to mark the beginning of a dramatic change for Native people. Their own way of life, developed over centuries of creative adaption to their environment, was to be interrupted and disrupted by contact with a very different way of life.

When the growth and development of a living thing is interrupted, that living thing will still try to keep growing, but under circumstances that are harmful to normal development. Imagine a patch of grass that has been covered by some object (like a box) for a month or two. The stalks become strangely shaped and crooked, they lose their bright green color and become a sickly yellowish white color--their normal development has been thwarted. Any society or civilization whose normal development is obstructed will also develop strange social problems such as alcohol and drug abuse or family violence (see Discussion Paper One of this series).

As an example of how this process works, we can look at two ways in which Native life was interrupted by the settlement of their lands by Europeans: the fur trade and residential schools.

The Fur Trade

The first Europeans to come to North America were explorers looking for trade routes to the Orient. Many of these explorers became fascinated with this "new world" they had found and eventually discovered that it had a wealth of its own--furs.

These early explorers and fur traders depended on Native people for their very survival. Without their assistance as guides and hunters, the Europeans, unfamiliar as they were with the environment, would have perished in much greater numbers than they did. The Europeans also relied on the Native people to supply them with the furs which were to make them wealthy among their own people. The Native people were also sought after as allies in the many battles between different, competing groups of traders and explorers. Thus, in the early days of contact between the Native people and the newcomers to North America, the Europeans were in many ways dependent on the Native people and tried to find ways to interest the Native people in helping them.

Even at this time, however, the large majority of Europeans did not consider native people as equals. Unable to understand many of the customs of the tribes they encountered, unable to understand their languages, and unable to appreciate their understanding of the universe and humanity's place in it, the Europeans viewed the Native

people as "noble savages"--uncivilized and unchristianized (and therefore out of contact with God) but yet very capable of using the wilderness to earn a living and meet all their basic needs.

Since Native people believed in living in harmony with nature, not in dominating and controlling it, the Europeans considered them less advanced. The proper station for human beings, the Europeans believed, was as masters and exploiters of all of the rest of creation. The Indians of North and South America had developed many very sophisticated skills, including those in the areas of agriculture, politics, and medicine mentioned at the beginning of this discussion paper. These skills were no less sophisticated than the skills of the Europeans. They arose out of a different concept of reality, one that gave as much emphasis to the spiritual aspects of the universe as to the physical.

Thus, from the very beginning, the difference between a primarily materialistic view of the world, and a view that gave as much weight to the spiritual as to the material, was to be a source of misunderstanding and prejudice.

Let's look at the fur trade and its effect on native people in a little more detail. In general, Native people, especially those tribes that relied primarily on hunting and trapping for survival, organized their affairs in a very co-operative fashion. Many of the hunting techniques

required close co-operation among several hunters (an example is the buffalo jumps used by the Blackfoot). Even when an individual hunter killed game everyone associated with him shared in the food. Usually there was a clearly understood system for dividing the game--the hunter might not even get the choicest piece.

Just as the fruits of the hunt were distributed co-operatively, so also the responsibility for survival was shared. Everyone had a role that contributed to the well-being of the whole unit (i.e. extended family, clan, or tribe). These individual roles were all a part of a highly integrated whole--a society that used everyone's capacities to ensure an acceptable quality of life for everyone.

The fur trade introduced several new concepts that disrupted this smoothly operating system. Individualized wealth, competition, new qualifications for leadership, and new working patterns are some examples.

Before the fur trade, furs were not viewed as valuable except for their contribution to survival. They were not accumulated for their own sake. A trapper would only get as many furs as he needed. The fur trade changed all that. Furs were sought after, not because of their usefulness in providing shelter from the cold, but rather because someone else valued them enough to exchange many other goods for them.

Because so much time had to be devoted to trapping, if enough furs were to be accumulated to acquire the new trade goods offered by the Europeans, there was not always enough time left to hunt and trap for the game needed for survival. In this way, Indians became dependent on European goods--flour, sugar, tea, cloth, etc. for survival. The more a Native family began to rely on these products for survival, the more energy they had to devote to trapping for furs because the price of these commodities kept rising. In order to keep up with the rising price of trade goods, the Native trapper had to also get enough furs to purchase the tools (e.g. guns, steel traps, outboard motors, fuel) which would enable him to trap enough furs to get the things he needed to survive. This vicious cycle of growing dependence on the European fur traders made Native people susceptible to starvation if fur prices dropped, for example, or if a particular type of fur went out of fashion.

Whereas formerly the whole of Native life was interrelated with the cycles of nature, now outside forces, far from the world of Native people, began to control how they lived. The seasons, the weather, the life cycle of plants and animals, and the cycle of predator and prey--these were things Native people could see and understand. What rich people in Europe considered fashionable was something Native people could not see or understand. And yet these same fashions had a very direct and often disastrous effect

on their lives. The Native person was slowly being robbed of the feeling of being in control of his world.

Even the tribes that were not so directly involved in the fur trade as the Cree and Dene, for example, became indirectly involved and thereby increased their dependence on trade goods. The Plains people, for example, made pemican and sold it to the fur traders for food or guns. The traders used some of the pemican and exchanged the rest for fur with the Cree. Thus, Plains people became influenced by the fur trade that was occuring further north.

Trapping for furs to trade also generated competition between individuals or groups. Since the profits of the fur trade went to the individual who brought the furs to the trading post, one individual could become a great deal richer (or poorer) than others. Encouraged by European materialism, individuals and tribes fought for control over certain fur-rich territories and over access to trading posts.

Some individuals or tribes began acting as middlemen, collecting the furs from the actual hunter and then doing the trading. In return for their furs, the hunters received a share of the profits and protection from others who might try to gain control over their territory or steal the furs.

This group of middlemen often assumed leadership roles because of their access to material wealth and because of

their increased contact with the whiteman who determined the price furs would receive. This was in contrast to the traditional view of leadership in terms of competencies in those skills which contributed to the survival of the people.

Traditionally most of the native people of Canada were migratory, i.e. they moved from place to place according to an annual cycle of hunting and fishing activities. Even those tribes that had more permanent settlements had annual cycles of hunting, fishing, gathering and agricultural activities. Part of the annual cycle were the times when people gathered for ceremony, celebration and the making of contractual agreements (e.g. marriages). Because the fur trade disrupted the annual food gathering cycle, it also disrupted this social and spiritual cycle. The unity of the family and tribe began to break down as individuals became responsible only for their own personal survival and as the time of coming together became dominated by trading activities and the consumption of one of the commodities made accessible through the fur trade--alcohol.

Some of the basic spiritual principles that had formed the foundation for the growth of Native cultures in Canada were being threatened. One example is the tradition of hospitality and sharing which was basic to the Native way of life. With the fur trade, people began to hoard goods for themselves rather than sharing freely. Individuals became

isolated from their families and tribes as they spent more and more time on the more-or-less solitary activity of trapping. The feelings of interrelatedness and co-operation were being lessened.

The above discussion about the effect of the fur trade on the ongoing development of Native societies has shown how some of the most basic principles of native life--interrelatedness, co-operation, and a recognition of the spiritual basis of all life--were disrupted by the fur trade.

The Effect of Residential Schools

Now let's look at how residential schools affected the children and families of one group of Native people, the Dene. Each people will have had a slightly different experience with residential schools, but this one example will illustrate many of the common effects: loss of language and cultural identity, alienation between the older and younger generation, severe psychological trauma for a whole generation of young people and their parents. The after effects of these painful experiences are still being felt in terms of social problems: child abuse and neglect, loss of good parenting skills, alcoholism, and unemployment, to mention just a few. Here, then, is a description of the residential school experience for the Dene people of the Northwest Territories.

The largest residential schools were located in Yellowknife and Inuvik and were built at the end of the 1950s. Four hundred to five hundred children attended each of these institutions. Somewhat smaller schools, which existed for many years before 1960, operated at Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Providence, Fort Smith and Hay River. As you read the following, bear in mind also the intimate nature of traditional family organization that typified Native societies throughout North America, the country food, the hunt, the language--and then consider the following description.

Speaking no English, having never ridden in a car or truck, having never seen a two-storey building, having never eaten anything but meat, fish, bannock and perhaps the occasional sweet treat, young Dene children (aged six or seven) left the world of the caribou eaters and were catapulted into the technocratic universe of the white man.

The "great round-up" as it was called, began in August. Children of all ages boarded one of hundreds of twin otter planes that fanned out across the Territories to collect the school children.

Often the ride made the children sick. Then, after lay-overs and waits and a transfer to a larger plane at a staging area--Inuvik or Yellowknife! The school "with its throngs of people, its gigantic buildings, its stifling steam

For him, to sit or lie upon the ground
is to be able to think more deeply and
feel more keenly; he can see more clearly
into the mysteries of life and come closer
in kinship to other lives about him.....

Kinship with all creatures of the earth,
sky and water was a real and active principle.
For the animal and the bird world there
existed a brotherly feeling that kept the
Lakota safe among them and so close did some
of the Lakotas come to their feathered and
furred friends that in true brotherhood they
spoke a common tongue.

The old Lakota was wise. He knew that man's
heart away from nature becomes hard, he knew
that lack of respect for growing, living
things soon led to lack of respect for humans
too. So he kept his youth close to its
softening influence.

Chief Luther Standing Bear (Lakota)

heat, its strange language, its unfamiliar food and its soft beds where one sleeps alone between white sheets" (Hobart 1965:2).

Children were then divided from siblings and friends according to age level, issued clothes and assigned a bed number. The supervisor (a native) spoke only English in order to force the children to learn. "No Loucheaux or Haire or Dogrib or Slavey is spoken here," they were told. Thus, for as long as a year, children were unable to express to anyone in authority what their basic needs were: loneliness, sickness, confusion; all had to be borne in lonely silence.

Aside from the heat, the communication vacuum, the trauma of sleeping alone, the strange food, the mammoth buildings, the sheer scale of social interaction (from a local group of perhaps thirty people, twenty of them children) and the meeting of other unique tribes and peoples who were fellow victims of the process--aside from all of this strangeness--the sheer regimentation and continual loss of personal liberties and individual control could not have been but a staggering shock to the new "student".

But little by little adjustments were made. English was learned (though often not too well) and the strange life became familiar and even pleasant. Then came summer vacation and for the student perhaps it was more traumatic to return to the life of his family than it had been to leave in the

first place. Food seemed coarse and undigestible. Dwellings were "dirty" and "cold". Things seemed ill at ease between child and parents. Parents complained of "disobedience" and "disrespectfulness", of their children being "hard to manage", and worst of all, "the child no longer saw and performed without prompting the chores which needed to be done. Instead the child had to be told what to do" (Hobart 1965:Chapter 3:8).

Dene camp life placed a large measure of responsibility on the children's shoulders. There were nets to be tended, dogs to be fed, wood to be cut and hauled, fish and meat to be prepared for drying, etc. The school life demanded very little in comparison and removed the burden of responsibility for the well-being of others from the child. At school he was no one's keeper, not even his own.

Parents complained of a loss of ability to speak the language of the family. Indeed, often after several years away at school, children found it very difficult to speak their mother tongue. Older students usually spoke English mixed with a Dene language to their peers and siblings. One researcher writing about the same phenomenon within the Cree in Quebec wrote:

> Parents often feel that children talk in English in order to prevent them from understanding what they are saying. Furthermore parents tend to associate the use of English with hostility

> because when children are angry
> they often yell at their parents or
> siblings in English. (Winthrob et al 1968:25)

Children, especially older children, tended to view vacations as relaxation periods and not a time to "work hard" as they had done all winter. Parents, on the other hand, felt that

> students have been "lazy" all winter
> and haven't done any real work while
> they (the parents) have had to cope with
> the ardours of life on the trapline.
> (Ibid.)

Naturally parents feel children should help the family with tasks like cooking, carrying water and wood, and other chores. When pressured older students refused to "listen". Instead they "talked back" and in general tended to form their own adolescent subcultures "based on shared experiences at school" (Ibid:27).

Parents noted that frequent, violent arguments (very foreign to Dene culture) arose and that children seemed as unconcerned about hurting others as they were unwilling to defer to elders. If we reflect on what the objectives were of those who planned and managed the residential school experience, these consequences are not at all surprising.

> The educational philosophy of the
> Educational Division of the Department
> of Northern Affairs and Natural
> Resources is based on the conception of
> a drastically changing Arctic and is

> catapulting children into educational situations designed to change their orientations, motivations, and skills with maximum rapidity. (Hobart 1965: Chapter 1:3)

In addition to the above we may add that this enterprise was conceived in the marriage of two assumptions: 1) Indian culture is not worth preserving. It is an outworn, useless, dying thing, and 2) the nature of man is to evolve (socially) to become cultural, social, political and economic replicas of Euro-Canadians.

What was most damaging from the Dene point of view, was that their children were taught that traditional values constitute obstacles to "progress and development"; that the individualistic achievement aspirations of southern Canadians are derived from a more "advanced" form of social organization; and that the political institutions and the economic assumptions of southern Canadians are infinitely superior to the primitive "anarchy" and pseudo-economy of the traditional Dene.

Dene children were taught to internalize the colonizer's perception of Dene culture. This perception was usually negative and condescending of the native way of life.

Eventually,

> the colonized accepts this caricature. All the institutions of society are shaped by the colonizer to fit his

> views of the colonized. Since the colonized is forced to function within those institutions, he begins to accept the colonizer's conception of him. If the colonized resists that image he is punished; if he is aggressive, refuses to work like an animal or to be an object, the colonizer's law is used to find him guilty. (Carnoy 1970:62)

A 1972 Northwest Territories Department of Education document (entitled "Elementary Education in the Northwest Territories") calling for radical changes in the approach taken toward Native people in the schools has this to say about discipline in the school system:

> Disciplinary practices can take several forms as for example raised voice; cuffing the child; using a convenient book to arouse the unwary from suspected apathy or lethargy; outright corporal punishment via a strap or ruler; deprivation of rewards. With few exceptions the non-Native person accepts any or all of these forms of punishment as quite routine. "It is the way it is done." In the Native experience overt signs of anger and frustration...have little meaning. What may appear to the non-Native as being permissive on the part of the parents in actuality may be a subtle yet effective approach to child-rearing based on love and understanding of a deeper quality than is conventionally known in many Euro-Canadian households... (N.W.T. Department of Education 1972:8)

The disorienting consequences for Dene children of spending the first (formative) six years of life being acculturated in traditional Dene patterns, and then being thrust into a foreign, brain-washing concentration camp style

school experience cannot but have caused severe, and in many cases unalterable, damage to the child, to the family, and to the community she was eventually to return to.

The effect on Dene communities of seeing their children go through such a devastating experience cannot be overestimated. The very roots of Dene culture were being severed, or perhaps more accurately, the roots had been infected with a malignant bacteria that was soon to alter the entire organism that was Dene society.

(Note: This section on residential schools is taken from M. Bopp's 1981 Masters Degree thesis entitled "The Dene Development Question").

Conclusion

We have looked at two examples of how native life, as it had been evolving over many centuries, was disrupted by its contact with a very different way of life. The following quotation is a summary of some of the negative effects of this interruption of what had been a whole and healthy way of life:

> At one stroke the government swept the Indians' economic base from under them and imposed a stiflingly heavy and totally alien bureaucracy on them from above. The migratory hunting existence which had given shape to native society and made every individual within it vitally important was actively discouraged and quickly rendered unviable for the majority of Indians, while the values which it promoted became increasingly irrelevant. The

> ceremonies and rituals which harmonized the spiritual and social life of the band and gave its members a sense of personal significance and group identity were deplored as heathen superstition, and celebrations such as the Sun Dance and the West coast people's Potlatch were banned. Indian children were sent to boarding schools for ten months of the year to separate them from "the degrading influence of their home life". By its very nature this educational arrangement disrupted the intricate pattern of relationships between child, parents, extended family and elders and the smooth transmission of beliefs, skills and knowledge from one generation to the next; but it deliberately accentuated the divorce of the child from his background by discrediting his culture, punishing him for speaking his own language, and preaching the superiority of white attitudes and accomplishments. The government further weakened the social structure by supplanting traditional leadership and decision-making processes, based on consensus, by a system of band councils and chiefs, elected on a majority vote as in Western parliamentary democracy (Wilson 1977).

The rest of the discussion papers of this series will be looking at ways that Native people can regain their connections with the wisdom which guided their development in the past, while at the same time incorporating the knowledge available through the insights, discoveries, and innovation of modern times.

This re-connection with traditional wisdom does not mean going back in time and living like people did many centuries ago. Nobody can ever really go back, because each new experience has changed us. What we can do is use that strong foundation of traditional wisdom and values to look at today's world. The steady growth of Native culture, interrupted by the harmful effects of many of the things that

In the last decade or so Indian people across the countries of Canada and the United States have been experiencing what might be called a revitalization. We have awakened just in time to rediscover something that might otherwise have passed from our memory and from our reality forever. I am referring to our great heritage our culture, and our values. Fortunately, we woke up in time. But when you wake up, the day just begins, so we still have a long way ahead of us and a lot of work to do now that we have awakened.

Tom Porter (Mohawk)

...Indian people in Canada are experiencing a reawakening. They have come of age. Indian people are saying that we are not satisfied with someone else shaping our future and running our affairs. Instead we want a future that will take into account our spirituality and our traditional forms of government, that will allow us to live the kind of lives we desire.

Del Riley

happened in the last four hundred years, can be continued again. Using the principles that guided life for such a long time, Native societies can continue to grow and develop.

This journey back to health and wholeness will mean a transformation of life, both for individuals and for communities. A contemporary rearticulation of traditional wisdom will establish a way of life based on the universal principles which are common to all traditional Native cultures. These principles deal with the nature of existence, the nature and purpose of human beings, and the means of preserving and enhancing the well-being of individuals as well as of communities. These universal principles are a part of the traditions of all Native people and have been re-stated in various ways by great spiritual teachers and thinkers of many cultures and traditions. Here is one way they can be expressed.

Universal First Principles

1. Wholeness. All things are interrelated. This connectedness derives from the reality that everything is a part of a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. Hence any given phenomenon can only be understood in terms of the wholeness out of which it comes.

2. Change. All of creation is engaged in a process of constant change. There are two general categories of change: development, or integration, and disintegration. Both are necessary and inseparably linked.

3. Process. The course of change generally follows observable patterns which occur in cycles or

stages. There is a direction (an implied intentionality) to all change that leads to some outcome which can only be fully understood in relationship to the context within which the process is taking place.

4. All of creation may be understood in terms of two categories of existence: material reality and spiritual reality. These two categories of existence are functionally inseparable. Yet there are distinct laws and principles which govern each dimension.

5. Human beings exist in connection with all other aspects of creation.

6. Human beings are material and spiritual beings.

7. Human beings are in the process of becoming (i.e. actualizing potentiality) from conception to eternity. This is true of individuals as well as human collectives such as the family and the community.

8. Human beings have the capacity to create further potentiality through the cumulative effects of learning and culture. Hence human potential may be regarded as infinite.

9. As human beings, we transcend the limitations of mere materiality by virtue of our ability to direct the process of our own becoming.

10. The spiritual dimensions of human development may be understood in terms of four related capacities.

    First, the capacity to formulate and/or to respond to non-material realities such as dreams, visions, ideals, spiritual teachings, aims, purposes, and theories.

    Second, the capacity to accept these realities as representations or manifestations of unknown human potential.

    Third, the capacity to give these non-material realities symbolic expression (through art, mathematics or language).

Fourth, the capacity to use this symbolic expression to guide action that is aimed at translating potentiality into actuality.

11. Human spirituality is expressed and developed through the practice of life-preserving, life-enhancing values. (A value may be understood as a patterned use of human energy.) These values (we may also call them qualities or virtues) include honoring the Creator, honesty, love, wisdom, justice, courage, respect, courtesy and humility, to name only a few. The realization of these values in human affairs is an indispensable component of human development.

12. The essence of human actualization is the process of coming to know and to love the ultimate unknowns underlying the ordering of the universe. This is an infinite process. It may be expressed by individuals as well as by human collectives.

Questions to think about:

1. Write a history of your own community. What caused your people to settle in your particular location? Where did the people live before they came to this settlement? What was their way of life? If more than one tribe or group of people is represented in your community, describe how each of them ended up in its present location. How did people's lives change after they formed settlements? Which Europeans were the first to contact your people? What was the relationship between the Native people and Europeans like? How has this relationship changed? Could this history be made into a drama and presented to the community?

2. How is the history you wrote in number one or the oral history that is part of your tribe's tradition different from the one you (or your children) studied in school?

3. What effects do you think residential schools had on your community? Are people still being affected by that experience?

4. Would you like to be able to go back to life "in

the good old days"? Is it possible to live exactly like people lived in the past? Why or why not? What relevance does the past have for today?

5. Think about each of the universal principles listed in this topic. How were they reflected in the traditional way of life of your people? How did contact with Euro-Canadians affect the application of these principles to everyday life? How are these principles reflected in the way of life of your people today? Which principles are being ignored or not upheld to a full degree?

6. Compile an anthology of quotes from Native elders and writers that express the same ideas as the universal principles listed in this Discussion Paper.

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